

A Study on Students' Knowledge Towards Job Profile for Students with Learning Disabilities in TVET

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Abstract

Technical and Vocational Education has (TVET) played a crucial role in the development of the potential of students in special education. Special education has implemented Specific Vocational Skills (KVS) programs to train students with special educational requirements, particularly those with learning disabilities. This effort is made to better comprehend and prepare for the skill requirements of industry-specific job profiles. However, lack of study has been researched on job profile from the context of industry for students with learning disabilities to penetrate the workforce. Therefore, this study aims to determine the level of knowledge about job profile skills among students enrolled in special education programs at public universities. Students from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) comprise a total of 31 respondents in this study's pilot survey. The questionnaire was disseminated online and was adapted from a number of earlier studies. This questionnaire is also divided into two sections: (i) demographic information and (ii) job profile knowledge. Data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 software descriptively. The results of this study indicate that the mean level of job profile knowledge among students in special education programs is 4.43. This demonstrates that knowledge of job profile is very important to ensure students with disabilities can adapt to the work environment and entered job market. Findings from this study contribute to educational institutions and industry's understanding and knowledge of job profile skills in order to provide semi-skilled labor workforce for the TVET industry.

Keywords: Job Profile, Knowledge, Students of Special Education Program, Vocational Education

Introduction

Education is the country's most important asset in producing a knowledgeable and highly skilled society to boost the country's economic activity, not excluding students with special needs. Hence, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a framework towards achieving sustainable development for all levels of society (Antonio Guterres, 2023). The Sustainable

Development Goals were first introduced in 2015 which have 17 goals and 169 specific targets that include the goal of eradicating poverty, protecting the earth from destruction and ensuring universal peace and well-being.

Through the first goal of SDG1: Eradicating poverty and the fourth goal of SDG4: Quality education can be achieved by empowering technical and vocational education to produce more skilled and semi-skilled workers for all levels of society including those with people with disability. Based on the latest statistics, estimated 1.3 billion number of people with disability has increasing every year of and almost reaches 16% of the total population in the world (Ghebreyesus, 2022). This proves that this group needs to be given the same rights as other normal people. They can also be contributors to the country's economic development if there is an organized and systematic path that can provide opportunities and space for them to be accepted by society.

Indirectly, the job opportunities offered to people with disability can eradicate the problem of poverty as well as improve the quality of living their lives like other normal people. Therefore, adapting the working ability of people with special needs to the job profile of a position in the job market is very important for every individual to understand, especially students of special education programs at public universities (Santos & Costa, 2016). As prospective graduates who will be faced with the challenge of managing people with special needs, it is necessary to pay serious attention to the issue of compatibility of the job profile offered with the attitude and behavior as well as the ability to work among individuals with special needs.

In addition to that, knowledge about the job profile in an industry needs to be fully understood so that potential graduates in the field of special education can train students with special needs with the skills required by the industry that are in line with the student's abilities and capabilities (Hayes & Bulat, 2017). This is important because there is a report on the graduates of disabilities from TVET 2021 stated that these disabilities graduates cannot survive in the world of work is high (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, 2021). According to (Nawafleh, 2023) the study supports the report's assertion that people with special needs are only able to maintain a position for a maximum of six months, and they frequently switch jobs, which has a negative impact on their career development.

Literature Review

Knowledge of job profiles contributes to the sustainability of the field of special education

Students who are majoring in special education are well knowledgeable about the job prospects that will be available to them after they graduate. The viability of the lives of persons who have special needs is intricately connected to the level of effort put forward to improve the standard of special education (Paloniemi et al., 2023; Wissell et al., 2022). This is due to the fact that contemporary society is becoming more capable of accepting the presence of minority groups within the national ecology if they are given the opportunity to do so.

With an understanding of job profiles focused at technical and vocational skills, it is possible to make a more accurate adjustment to the capacities of persons with special needs based on attitudes and behaviors that promote the quality of each job profile that is done (Sutcliffe & Radonovich, 2023). As you are aware, an industry or company is very concerned with profit and quality efficiency in the workplace. The competencies and behaviors that benefit the organization may be employed optimally (Opoku, 2022). As a result, it gives more precise

input to the special education system in order to generate a workforce, particularly from underserved groups, to fill employment openings in the industry.

Good collaboration between industry and special education institutions can be established to ensure the sustainability of special education can be achieved in the future (Gupta et al., 2021; Shaw et al., 2022). The field of special education should be able to provide quality education to all students in order to better understand the criteria of each category of people with special needs which are indeed unique and special (Scheef, 2023). In special education schools, students are separated based on their abilities and disability categories. The category of students with special needs to be separated based on their ability to facilitate the efforts of teaching and learning methods between teachers and students in buffering knowledge and skills.

The categories of vision problems and hearing problems are separated from physical problems and learning problems because their medium of delivery is different and their level of focus is different (Hayes & Bulat, 2017). Therefore, in special education, teachers are encouraged to use various teaching mediums that can be adapted to the level of acceptance of students with special needs (Ginevra et al., 2022; Ibrahim et al., n.d.; Zulkarnain et al., 2017). Therefore, the job profile for people with special needs also needs to be in line with their level of ability and ability in order to build a good career in the future.

The importance of understanding the job profile for special education students

A clear understanding of the job profile gives a more accurate picture of a certain norm or environmental setting of a job (Morningstar et al., 2017; Pontes et al., 2021). This contributes to the motivation of students with special needs to continue to cultivate a deep interest in work and thus be willing to face any challenge in today's world of work.

According to the study (Pezzimenti et al., 2023) states that autistic students have an attitude that likes to do repetitive work without getting tired, in addition to that, this group is seen to be more thorough in carrying out work in addition to being very punctual. Such an attitude makes employers more interested in offering jobs to them. In addition, their more loyal attitude is greatly appreciated by employers who often experience problems in retaining employees for a long period of time (Bury et al., 2020; Harvery et al., 2021). Therefore, with the knowledge of the job profile, special education institutions can do an initial assessment of the tendencies and attitudes that are suitable to be proposed with the job profile that can be implemented by this special group.

The hospitality and food service industry are one of the industries that is seen to be able to open up job opportunities for people with special needs because in that field there is a job profile that requires employees to do the same routine every day throughout the working period (Sharma & Sharma, 2019). There is no doubt that more and more food service and hospitality-based courses are being offered in special education schools (Rahman et al., 2020). In addition, food service premises also offer job opportunities for people with special needs. According to the training officer, they strongly encourage this group to apply for a job at their premises. Premises also get an advantage by offering jobs to people with special needs. Employers will get a positive impression from their customers' feedback which encourages them to hire employees with special needs instead of hiring foreigners to work.

With an understanding of this job profile, special education students will be more assured of job opportunities (Albright et al., 2020; Helena et al., 2023). They are more prepared and understand the duties and responsibilities of a job that needs to be carried out while working

(Brendle et al., 2019). All procedures and during work must be followed and comply with the work norms. A job profile can be considered as a guideline in performing a job (Cimini et al., 2023). There are various positions in the job market, therefore a clear understanding of the job profile of a position will provide suitability and comfort to work for this group of people with special needs.

Methodology

This study uses a descriptive survey research design. The target population of this study is special education program students at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). A total of 31 special education program students participated in this study by filling out the questionnaire provided. A structured questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. The questionnaire was adopted from a previous study by (Stewart, 1996). The questionnaire consists of two parts (Part A and Part B). Part A contains participant background information regarding gender, race, program level and knowledge of job profiles. While Part B consists of three domains matching the job profile with the working ability of special education students with learning disabilities. Five Likert scales were used for each item between 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Not Sure (NS), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA).

In terms of instrument reliability, Cronbach's alpha was determined to confirm the reliability of the instrument. Based on a pilot study that has been conducted on 31 special education program students at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). According to (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000) suggest a minimum sample size for quantitative research is 30 sample. Therefore, in this pilot study, the data obtained, collected and measured the level of reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha Statistical Test in the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) software version 20.0. This statement is supported by (Mohd Majid, 2005; Pallant, 2010) who states that Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.60 is used to measure the reliability index of a research instrument. For (Sekaran, 1992), a Cronbach Alpha value less than 0.60 is unacceptable, a value between 0.60 to 0.80 is acceptable and a value above 0.80 is considered good and can be used. Therefore, in determining the reliability of the research instrument, the researcher chose to use Cronbach Alpha based on the views (Sekaran, 1992; Mohd Majid 2005; Creswell, 2009 & Pallant, 2010). Table 1 shows the Cronbach Alpha values for the whole and each domain.

Table 1

Reliability index classification

Indicator	Alpha Cronbach Value
Very high	>0.90
High	0.7 – 0.89
Moderate	0.3 – 0.69
Low	<0.30

Cronbach Alpha value obtained for the knowledge domain is 0.902 which is above than 0.7. This means that the instrument is reliable. The reliability of this research instrument refers to the stability and internal consistency of the questionnaire (Sekaran, 1992; Creswell, 2009; Pallant, 2010). To measure the internal consistency of a construct, the Cronbach Alpha value should be used as a reference.

The questionnaire was administered to respondents online through a Google form. The link is provided to the student representative for each program of study to be shared across all special education program students. Data was collected between the period May-July 2023. The data obtained was extracted, cleaned and transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 for analysis. Findings have been presented using the method in the form of a table. In interpreting special education students' knowledge of job profile, the researcher refers to the interpretation of knowledge from as shown in Table 2. Since the options are coded as 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, it is suggested that the mean score 3.40 can be identified as the expected level of knowledge of job profile knowledge. Interpretation of mean scores as displayed in Table 2 as quoted from Pallant (2010).

Table 2

Mean score interpretation

Mean score	Interpretation
1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.24 – 3.67	Intermediate
3.68 – 5.00	High

Result and Discussion**Demography Characteristic**

The demographic analysis from the respondents which obtained in this study including of gender, race and level of program in special education program as shown in Table 3. Referring to the data, its revealed that 67.7% of the respondents are female and 32.3% of them are male respondents. Most of respondents are Malay students with 93.5%, Chinese students with 3.2%, Indian students with 3.2%. Majority of the respondents is from degree program (35.5%), doctorate program (32.3%), master degree program (25.8%) diploma (3.2%) and others (3.2%). Data also shows that, 77.4% of the respondents mentioned that they have known about job profile meanwhile 22.6% of the respondents did not know about job profile

Table 3

Demography analysis of the respondents

Demography characteristic		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	10	32.3
Female	21	67.7
Total	31	100
Race	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Malay	29	93.5
Chinese	1	3.2
Indian	1	3.2
Total	31	100
Level of program	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Degree	11	35.5
Doctorate	10	23.1
Master degree	8	32.3
Diploma	1	3.2

Others	1	3.2
Total	31	100
Knowledge of job profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	77.4
No	7	22.6
Total	31	100

Result and Discussion

Demography Characteristic

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Students' knowledge towards job profile

Knowledge is an important foundation in shaping students' views and actions towards an issue discussed. Knowledge can be gained through reading, knowledge sharing and also existing experiences as well as new experiences. Each individual has their own strengths and tendencies in understanding a concept and issue based on an individual perspective. Special education program students need to have knowledge of job profiles available in the job market (Zimmermann & Brandtner, 2022). Students also need to be proficient in making self-assessments in which the assessment must include the domain of work ability, inclination and interest in the profile of a job. If the student clearly understands the job profile, duties and responsibilities, scope of work, procedures involved and a guaranteed career path.

Students have the opportunity to explore job profiles that match their ability to work as well as attitudes and criteria that are in line with the field of work, they are engaged in. Through the findings of Holland (1977) who suggested that humans have six components such as Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC) that represent individual criteria with jobs that match the individual (Fernandez et al., 2023). This finding also supported by (Etsel et al., 2023) about the component of characteristic human being that were focusing on vocational occupational.

As a start to the description and interpretation of the data, the results of the analysis show that as many as 77.4% of respondents know about the job profile. While only 22.6% never knew about the job profile. (Figure 1). An item that asks why knowledge of job profiles is needed in the field of special education for students? Among the short answers given by the respondents is that students with special needs need a job profile that suits the abilities and limitations they face, to help them improve their quality of life and help the government and industry provide suitable job opportunities.

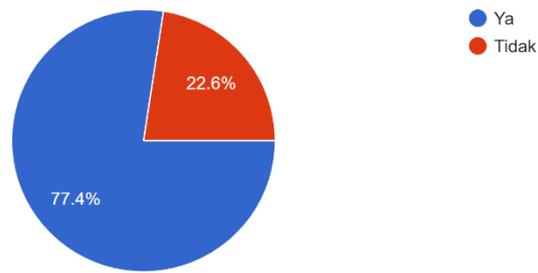


Figure 1: Knowledge of job profile skills

Overall, the data show that students' perceptions of job profiles are comprised of knowledge domains. Each mean value for each domain is taken into account. The knowledge domain measures five items in identifying the level of knowledge of special education program students regarding job profiles. Table 4 shows the data from the knowledge domain listed as in the table.

Table 4

Min values for knowledge domain

Domain: Knowledge of job profile for students in special education program		
Statements	Mean (M)	Interpretation
I believe proficiency in job profiles will increase self-motivation for students with learning disabilities to work	4.33	High
I'm sure students with learning disabilities will enjoy working when they understand the duties and responsibilities that need to be carried out.	4.53	High
I am confident that students with learning disabilities will be more focused and thorough when carrying out the tasks given	4.46	High
I am sure that students with learning disabilities can carry out the task diligently.	4.33	High
I believe students with learning disabilities is proficient with profiles workers will feel themselves more valued.	4.50	High
Total	4.43	High

According to Table 4, the mean score for each item is quite high. The item with the highest mean is the one on which students with learning difficulties will appreciate working when they comprehend the assigned tasks and responsibilities (M=4.53). The item learning problem pupils feel more valued when they have mastered the job profile (M=4.50) has the second-highest mean value. As indicated by the item's mean value (M=4.46), students with learning difficulties are more focused and meticulous when completing assigned tasks. There are two items with the same mean value for the lowest mean value, which is (M=4.33). The product is that students with learning disabilities are eager to complete assignments, and students with learning disabilities are more motivated in the workplace if they comprehend the job description for each available position.

It can be inferred that students enrolled in special education programs possess a comprehensive understanding of the occupational requirements associated with catering to

the unique demands and learning difficulties of pupils requiring special education. This finding aligns with the findings of previous studies (Halimoon et al., 2021; Zimmermann & Brandtner, 2022) which assert that having knowledge about the job profile is crucial in assuring the suitability of the work capabilities of students with learning difficulties. The present outcome diverges from the research conducted by (Budde et al., 2023) wherein it was concluded that awareness of the job profile did not have an impact on the capacity of students with learning difficulties to adapt their cyber security skillset.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to assess the degree of knowledge among students enrolled in special education programs at public universities in Malaysia regarding the idea of job profiles. The results of the study indicate that these students possess a high level of knowledge in this particular domain. The findings of this study indicate that students enrolled in special education programs at USM and UPSI possess a comprehensive understanding of the significance and necessity of job profiles for individuals with learning impairments. This understanding enables them to make informed decisions on career choices and select job profiles that align with their capabilities within the professional setting. Based on the comprehensive analysis of the available data, the substantial level of knowledge observed instills optimism for the future, as it suggests the potential for individuals with special needs to be embraced and integrated into diverse businesses within Malaysia.

This study presents a favorable perspective on the extent of information possessed by students in special education programs at public institutions regarding job profile skills that align with the employment capabilities of individuals with learning disabilities related to special needs. In order to facilitate future research endeavors, it is recommended that the aforementioned instrument be disseminated among educators who instruct students with learning disabilities. This will enable a comparative analysis of the viewpoints held by prospective special education teachers and those who possess extensive experience in effectively managing special needs cohorts. The ultimate objective of this undertaking is to ascertain the extent to which these perspectives align with the criteria required for securing suitable employment opportunities.

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